(c) whether Government has also initiated the process for the second phase of FM Radio licences; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Based on the Cabinet decision of 18.3.2003, regarding uplinking policy for foreign news channels, the Government revised its guidelines for such channels on 26.3.2003. The Guidelines for uplinking of the foreign owned news channels, *inter-alia,* permit foreign equity hailing in the applicant company up to 26% of the total paid up capital and require the company to be registered in India under the Companies Act, 1956 and majority of Directors, CEO and News Editor(s) to be Resident Indians.

Further, the permission for usage of facilities/infrastructure for live news/ footage collection and transmission, irrespective of the technology used, will be given to only those channels which are uplinked from India and the channel/company will ensure that its news and current affairs content provider(s), if any, are accredited with the Press Information Bureau.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A Committee had been constituted under the Chairman, BECIL for planning of frequencies for FM radio stations to be taken up in the second phase.

Scrapping of the Official Secrets Act

803. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Journalists Union has urged the Centre to scrap the outdated Official Secrets Act and amend the working Journalists Act to curb the contract system in the field and ensure free flow of information for democracy to flourish;

(b) if so, whether Government have considered the suggestions;

(c) the reasons for not accepting the suggestions; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Media Partners Asia report on CAS

†804. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the study report undertaken by the Hongkong based Media Partners Asia;

(b) if so, whether the said organisation has published study report after assessing the situation prevailing in that country after implementing the Conditional Access System there; and

(c) if so, the salient features thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) Media Partners Asia Limited in their Report dated 8th May, 2003 have *inter-alia,* stated that:-

- Successful CAS implementation could boost the entertainment economy long term.
- The Government would benefit from greater services and entertainment tax collected from the improved addressability and higher revenue from duties on the import of CAS technology.
- The Cable Television consumers would be protected from arbitrary price increase and benefit from higher quality of service and choice at affordable prices.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.